

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

Sub A1

1. A method for transaction processing of a search transaction comprising the steps of:
 - a) receiving a plurality of search queries from users, each of said plurality of search queries including search criteria and including a user address;
 - b) normalizing said search criteria so as to obtain normalized search criteria; and
 - c) transmitting said normalized search criteria to a search engine.
- 10 *Sub B1* 2. The method of Claim 1 further including the steps of:
 - d) receiving a response from said search engine that includes search results; and
 - e) generating a response to each of said search queries from users, each response including search results corresponding to the search criteria submitted by that particular user; and
 - f) transmitting said responses to each of said users.
- 20 3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 - d) transmitting said user addresses to said search engine.

4. The method of Claim 3 wherein the search engine is operable to generate search results and to generate a response to each of said search queries using said user addresses, said response transmitted from said search engine to each of said users.

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5. The method of Claim 1 wherein step b) further comprises:

b1) comparing said search criteria from each of said queries;

b2) determining commonalities between said search criteria; and

b3) generating normalized search criteria, said normalized search

10 criteria consolidated based on the commonalities determined in step b2) so as to eliminate redundant search criteria.

6. The method of Claim 1 wherein said search engine is a software

program operable on a first computing device, said steps a)-c) performed by a

15 second computing device that is coupled to said first computing device.

7. The method of Claim 6 wherein said first computing device is

coupled to said second computing device using a local area network.

20 8. The method of Claim 6 wherein said first computing device is coupled to said second computing device using a wide area network.

9. The method of Claim 6 wherein said first computing device is coupled to said second computing device via the Internet.

10. The method of Claim 1 wherein said search engine is a first 5 software program operable on a first computing device, said steps a)-c) performed by a second software program operable on said first computing device.

Sub A2 11. In a computer system including a processor coupled to a bus, and 10 a memory unit coupled to the bus for storing information, a computer-implemented method for communicating with a user comprising the steps of: a) receiving a plurality of search queries from users, each of said plurality of search queries including search criteria and including a user address; b) normalizing said search criteria so as to obtain normalized search 15 criteria; and c) transmitting said normalized search criteria to a search engine.

12. The computer-implemented method of Claim 11 further including the steps of:

20 d) receiving a response from said search engine that includes search results;

e) generating a response to each of said search queries from users, each response including search results corresponding to the search criteria submitted by that particular user; and

f) transmitting said responses to each of said users.

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13. The computer-implemented method of Claim 11 further comprising the step of:

d) transmitting said user addresses to said search engine.

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14. The computer-implemented method of Claim 13 wherein the search engine is operable to generate search results and to generate a response to each of said search queries using said user addresses, said response transmitted from said search engine to each of said users.

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15. The method of Claim 11 wherein step b) further comprises:

b1) comparing said search criteria from each of said queries;

b2) determining commonalities between said search criteria; and

b3) generating normalized search criteria, said normalized search criteria consolidated based on the commonalities determined in step b2) so as

20 to eliminate redundant search criteria.

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Sub 3

16. A system for transaction processing of a search transaction comprising:

a) a first computing system including a search engine program operable to search a database;

b) a second computing system including at least one computing device that is coupled to the Internet, said second computing system coupled to said

5 first computing system; and

c) a software program operable on said first computing device for receiving a plurality of search queries from users, each of said plurality of search queries including search criteria and including a user address, said software program operable to normalize said search criteria so as to obtain

10 normalized search criteria and operable to transmit said normalized search criteria to said first computing system.

17. The system of Claim 16 wherein the software program is operable to receive a response from said first computing device that includes search results, and is operable to generate a response to each of said search queries from users, each response including search results corresponding to the search criteria submitted by that particular user, and is operable to transmit said responses to each of said users.

20 *Subj P1* 18. In a computer system having a processor coupled to a bus, a computer readable medium coupled to said bus and having stored therein a computer program that when executed by said processor causes said computer

system to implement a method for transaction processing of a search transaction, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving a plurality of search queries from users, each of said plurality of search queries including search criteria and including a user address;
- 5 b) normalizing said search criteria so as to obtain normalized search criteria; and
- c) transmitting said normalized search criteria to a search engine.

19. A computer readable medium as described in Claim 18 wherein
10 said computer implemented method stored on said computer readable medium further comprises the step of:

- d) receiving a response from said search engine that includes search results;
- e) generating a response to each of said search queries from users, each response including search results corresponding to the search criteria submitted by that particular user; and
- 15 f) transmitting said responses to each of said users.

20. A computer readable medium as described in Claim 18 wherein
20 step b) of said computer implemented method stored on said computer readable medium further comprises the steps of:

- b1) comparing said search criteria from each of said queries;
- b2) determining commonalities between said search criteria; and

b3) generating normalized search criteria, said normalized search criteria consolidated based on the commonalities determined in step b2) so as to eliminate redundant search criteria.

5 21. The method of Claim 20 wherein said search engine is a software program operable on a first computing device, said steps a)-c) performed by a second computing device that is coupled to said first computing device.